

A HOUSE-HUSBAND CALLED PHILPOT

Perhaps he should paint his toenails today
and be one with the woman. There are no

children to vegetate to, no race of males
to liberate himself from: he has bought

the time his talent demanded, and talent
sneaked away leaving him exposed. Neighbouring

house-husbands with time on their hands, drop
by to debate issues of the day, the big

questions of life, like getting into a Lady's
purse, or into her bed -- and ways of being good

to their women, out at work. Certainly,
this sort of training (in place of child-

bearing) has kept his friends from turning
into cabbage. Later, the women will blame them

for that. But as always, there's the catch.
Childhood acne has followed him into middle-age:

it's his personal wiping-the-baby's-bottom curse
as blood and matter spurt on the mirror, leaving

his face, well-repaired, a mass of scars and ruts
and scabs of differing colours. How could she

come home to such a mess? He will paint his toe-
nails after all. That might divert her.